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**Testimony to the Human Services Committee**

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**Regarding H.B. 6417****An Act Concerning Medicaid Administration and Services****Jeffrey Walter****March 2, 2008**

My name is Jeffrey Walter and I am here as co-chair of the CT Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council to testify in favor of HB 6417, AAC Medicaid Administration and Services. The BHP is the entity that provides behavioral health care services to HUSKY A and B recipients as well as children and youth under DCF's Voluntary Services Program. The Oversight Council is comprised legislators and their designees, advocates, providers, consumers and state agencies. It is co-chaired by myself and Senator Jonathan Harris. The council was established in statute to review the plans of DSS and DCF- the state agency partners- for provision of services, including the effectiveness of the program in expanding community-based, family-centered services and reducing unnecessary institutional care. The council is also charged with review and approval of provider rates and program financing.

The oversight council favors HB 6417 because the bill provides for the review and approval by the council of regulations governing the BHP that the DSS proposes to enact.

The council requests that the Human Services Committee amend the bill to include an additional provision that the DSS provide to the Partnership an annual budget increase no less than the percentage increase provided to the HUSKY health plans. The rationale for this provision is that, prior to the carve-out of behavioral health services in 2006, these services were provided by the health plans. Providers and advocates feared that, once separated from the HUSKY plans, behavioral health services would not benefit from increases provided to the managed care organizations. A statutory provision will remedy this potential inequity.

I appreciate your support of services to the Medicaid and DCF population and your support of our council.